THE

UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

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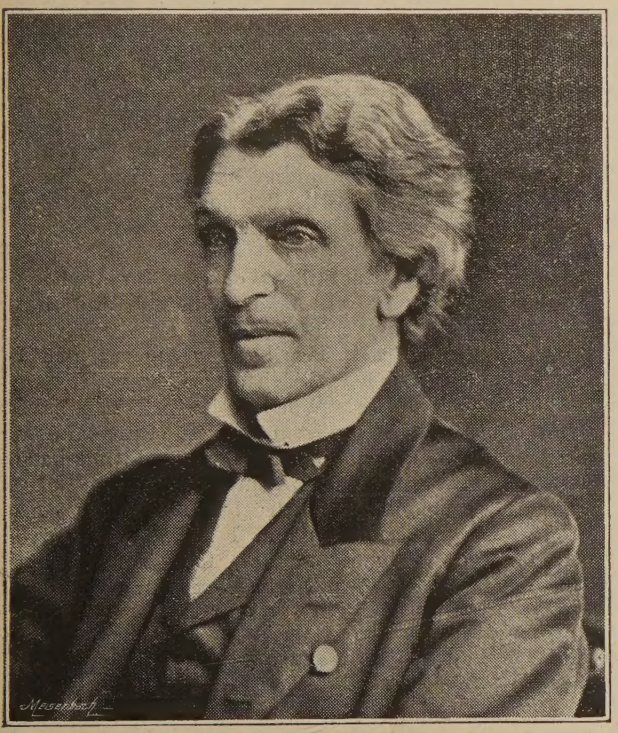

REV. DR. JAMES MARTINEAU.

1805—1900.

For biographical particulars and later portrait see "Unity," September, 1906, page 97.

Martineau Memorial Buildings were opened on Thursday, Nov. 14th, at Norwich, by Sir W. B. Bowring, Bart., of Liverpool.

Now that by means of the National Conference there is a serious attempt being made for the more complete organisation of Unitarian churches into a coherent body, it may be well to recall Dr. Martineau's organisation scheme, propounded at the Leeds Conference in 1888. It proposed to remedy the weakness of church isolation by strength of combination, based financially on a "Pastorate Fund," to secure to the ministers of the poorest churches a minimum stipend of £150 a year by congregational contributions to a Central Body. Its proposal to denominate this body of churches under the one title of "English Presbyterian" was unacceptable, and that may have blinded many Unitarians to the wise and excellent suggestions the scheme contained. There is no doubt whatever that the National Conference will aim to secure more combination for mutual support amongst the churches holding the Unitarian faith, which Dr. Martineau desired; but when realised it will be on conditions in accord with greater missionary zeal for the propagation of the doctrines for which our Unitarian churches have their existence separate from orthodoxy.

The portrait here given shows Dr. Martineau at an earlier date, in the prime of life.

Varieties.

Ever the larger faith
  Makes way 'mid doubt and scorn,
And in its latest word
  Anew the Christ is born.
His true disciples they,
  The wide earth o'er who own
Truth in her manger low
  Ere yet she mounts the throne.

—F. L. Hosmer.

"Why do they not give such presents every day?" said Clara.

"Oh, child,' 'I said, "it is only for thirty-six hours of the three hundred and sixty-five days that all people remember that they are all brothers and sisters, and those are the hours that we call, therefore, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day."

"And when they always remember it," said Bertha, "it will be Christmas all the time!"—Edward Everett Hale.

We send heartiest Christmas greeting to all who may be reached by this month's issue. May it bring joy and happiness to all, and cause of regret to none. While we commemorate the birth of him whose disciples we profess to be, let us strive to live more and more in his Spirit; let us promote Peace on Earth and Goodwill among men by fostering among ourselves that spirit which makes for peace and goodwill; let us "seek peace and pursue it," and, as members of a Christian Church, let us endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.

Thanks ! that Jesus came.

Jesus, Son of Mary, came,
Just a real human child;
Born as every babe—the same—
As of every land and name;
Just a real human child.

Jesus, son of Joseph, too—
Lowly born—with soul divine;
By his parents' love he grew;
By their tender care and true,
Learned of them the life divine.

Jesus, child of humankind,
Son of man, yet son of God:
Spirit from the Heavenly Mind;
Every soul is God-designed—
Child of man, and child of God.

Jesus, pattern for us all;
Human, God-like—just as we.
Thou didst heed the heavenly call;
Pure and true, whate'er befall—
We may be divine like thee.

Thanks to God that Jesus came!
Thanks that he has shown the way!
Thanks! that men of every name,
Him—their brother—may acclaim,
Herald of the brighter day. H.B.S.

For All or None.

By the Author of "Randal's Principle."

CHAPTER XI.

"Father, how was it that you happened to be near the canal that night when you were attacked and thrown in?" asked Ruth, when Robert Colton had recovered.

"Well, I will tell you. I had gone out of curiosity to hear a man give a lecture in the Market Place. His name is Randal Wray. He was advertised to speak on a subject which attracted me. It was 'God vindicated and Hell a delusion.' I wondered what he would make of it, and so I went. And after the lecture I took the canal road home for short."

"And what did you think of Randal Wray?"

"Think of him? I was surprised. He was a revelation to me. I have never heard things put that way before by anybody. He made me believe more in God, and yet he turned me into what we usually term 'an infidel.' I had been blind, but he made me to see that God's love makes eternal torments impossible. And as I was walking along the canal towing path, I was thinking what an ignorant and misguided fellow I had been; how hard and unChristian my attitude towards men like Ralph Rendel and that young man of yours—Will Smeeton. And I was inwardly denouncing myself as a fool for my pains, when I was attacked from behind, my pockets rifled, and because I shouted and struggled I was pushed into the water. It was lucky I was not drowned outright."

"And were you really thinking kindly of Will before you were pushed into the canal?" queried Ruth again, somewhat coyly.

"Yes, I was. I felt I had been very unjust to him, and I was just thinking how I must make amends, when the thieves suddenly got hold of me. And then to think that he should be the one who saved my life! When I realised that, I felt even more ashamed of myself. It was just like a man loving his enemy for him to save ME. But of course he didn't know who the drowning man was till I was pulled out; and then he would be glad for a certain young woman's sake—wouldn't he, eh? And I am sure he will make just the kind of son-in-law that I shall be most proud to have."

"Do you mean it, father?" exclaimed Ruth quite excitedly, and with eyes beaming gladness upon him. "Are you teasing me, or are you in earnest?"

"I am in earnest—I am for sure! No one is more pleased now, than I am, that Will Smeeton is going to be your husband. For I suppose he is going to be—isn't he? You don't want anybody else, do you?"

"Why, you know I wouldn't have anybody else."

"But that does not settle it. There are two sides to a question, you know. What has Will to say about it?"

"Will says he cannot think or care for anybody but me, and that he will take no denial, and that he will wait for your consent."

"Then that settles it. He has my consent, and I hope you will both make each other happy."

"Thank you, father! What a change! You have lifted a load of sorrow from me. It seems almost too good to be true," and Ruth here could not keep back the tears of joy that streamed down her cheeks.

"I've been a sinner, Ruth; but I am now converted and a better man, and I know you forgive me, and so does your mother, too. You do not know what a champion she has been for you. The best I can wish for my Ruth is that she will make as good a wife as her mother."

Just at this point Mrs. Colton had come in, and Ruth kissed her, and kissed her father also.

Is it any wonder that after this, Ralph Rendel, Will Smeeton, Robert Colton, and others who had listened to the Market Place lecture wrote to Randal Wray and arranged for him to visit the town again? Or that, when he did come, they urged him to assist to establish a Religious Society based upon the pure Christianity which he himself had preached? and that this was done, and that this Religious Society was named "The Unitarian Church"? It was really no wonder at all, when all the circumstances are considered, but it was to the people of the town and district, who were greatly stirred by the advent of this new interpretation of the Gospel.

At the inauguration meeting there were several Unitarian divines present taking part in the functions, and a large number of Unitarians from other towns. Randal Wray was appointed to give a special address as the founder of the new Church, in which he said: "My principle is that 'The Truth will make you free,' we believe that God is no res-

pecter of persons, that He loves all, and that His salvation is for all in this life and in all worlds to come, so that not one shall be permitted to be lost or excluded from the sharing of the divine blessings."

"Ah!" a listener was heard to exclaim: 'For all, or none."

The Faith of a Unitarian.

By the REV. J. MORLEY MILLS.

That God is One, is Love, and is the Father of our spirits (i Cor. viii., 6), and that all who ever so dimly recognise, and "in spirit and truth" reverence the Unseen One are His accepted worshippers. Not that God is Three Persons in One God, and One God in Three Persons, which belief is to Unitarians unscriptural and unthinkable.

That Jesus was a great Prophet and Teacher, whose teachings about God and humanity are the truest, whose life was the holiest, and whose death was the sublimest yet chronicled, and that true Christians are all those who try to think and act according to His precepts and example; that He was a Son of God, indicating the divine in all men, not God the Son, suffering in His person the wrath of God the Father for the sins of the world.

That The Bible records the thoughts of devout men about God and His works, as from age to age He became more fully known; that it is pre-eminently the book of religious experience, and, as such, to be read and pondered by all who would profit by the lessons of the past. Not that it is the infallibly inspired word of God, containing the complete revelation of God for all time.

That Man is the Child of God created unto good works, that the human race is a spiritual brotherhood, and that all men can directly approach the Father, as Jesus taught in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, without intervention of Mediator, Altar, Priest, Creed, or Church. Not that man is a fallen creature, incapable of any effort after Truth and Purity, and dependent on the blood of the innocent to purchase him reconciliation with God.

That Religion consists in loving God supremely, and our Neighbour as ourselves, i.e., in living for the utmost expression of love. Not in merely going to church, accepting the Sacraments, and endorsing the Creeds.

That Salvation means, on the one hand, deliverance from Sin, Error, and the Misery which comes of these, and, on the other hand, the development of every faculty and feeling towards the standard of the perfect man. That the test of Salvation is Character, not a profession of belief.

That The Future will depend upon what we are, rather than where we are; upon our character, and our desire to love God and to do good. He who has been faithful to the lesser responsibilities of this life will enter into the joy of greater opportunities for knowing God, and growing into His likeness; he who has been unfaithful, and has thereby injured his own soul, brought suffering on others, and grieved God, will suffer the shame and misery consequent thereon, until by repentance and amendment he regains peace.

That The Unchangeable Love of God will be extended to His children throughout eternity, and the door of His mercy will ever be open to the repentant. Not that the sinner will at death be plunged into a place of everlasting perdition, where all further opportunity to know, love, and serve God will never come, and the mercy of the All Loving Father can never enter.

Simplicity of Unitarianism.

How, then, is it, we may be asked, if Unitarian Christianity is so simple, that the majority of Christians do not prefer it to the difficulties of "orthodox" Christianity? There may be many reasons for this. One of them certainly is, that the majority of people do not prefer simplicity. They find no difficulty in professing to accept propositions which no one professes to understand. Most people appear to prefer to occupy themselves with unprofitable speculations, rather than be content with the performance of duty. It is not difficulty, but facility, which men feel in departing from simplicity. They really avoid trouble in dispersing energy in directions where it produces no results, or results that could be better done without. "It is more difficult," says Ruskin, "to be simple than to be complicated; far more difficult to exercise skill and exertion in the proper place than to expend both indiscriminately."

Simplicity is the highest attainment in art, and the highest attainment in religion is to reach the simplicity of Christ.—Selected.

Who Degrade Christ?

Unitarian Christians are charged with degrading Christ. Who degrade Christ? They that behold in him a man in all respects like his brethren, tempted as they are, yet without sin; made perfect by suffering; despising the shame for the glory that was set before him; yielding up his life with assured faith in the promises of God that he should receive it again; and giving to all an example of sinless purity and unfainting obedience to the will of God? Or they who regard him, as himself a Divinity or a super-angelic nature, superior to suffering, superior to temptation, incapable of sin; whose sinlessness therefore had no merit, whose devotion had no heroism, whose resurrection is in itself no demonstration that man will be raised from the grave; whose life and martyrdom, whose actions and sufferings are too supernatural for example, can awaken no admiration, can excite no sympathy? —From an old Unitarian Journal.

It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself.—Dickens.

What to Teach.

[The Editor preached a sermon at a Sunday school anniversary on "What should we teach our children?" and a man who heard it wrote afterwards wishing for a copy of it, as it had helped him to realise his duty to his own child; but as the sermon was not reported, was delivered without notes, and was inspired by the occasion, there existed no copy of it; and so the Editor consented to publish in "The Unity" the ideas which it embodied. These will be set forth in short articles continuing in 1908, under the following heads: 1, Introduction; 2, What is in Man? 3, Possibility and Environment; 4, Self-possession and Self-control; 5, Freedom; 6, Equality; 7, Fraternity; 8, What we owe; 9, Accountability; 10, Education; 11, Citizenship; 12, Heaven on Earth.]

I.—INTRODUCTION.

What ought Unitarians to teach their children? Of course—the ideas and principles of Unitarianism. Of that there should be no doubt, nor hesitation in doing it.

But this includes more than appears. Faith in God, faith in human nature and its infinite possibilities, and other doctrines, must be based upon reasons which can be explained.

Each child that comes into the world has a mission of its own, which is not exactly the same as that of any other individual. It possesses the same nature as all other children, but differently compounded. In each child the same powers exist, but owing to special heredity they are mixed together in such comparative degrees of strength that the combination in each is not the same as in any other. Consequently each, to begin with, is by the peculiar balance of endowment specially fitted for activity in a certain direction. This line of activity is its special mission of service to humanity. We need to teach, then, that each child is here for a special purpose—to render the highest service to mankind and to God that it is capable of doing—and along that line of its best and highest service to become perfect in moral character as God is perfect.

And a fact that should be made clear is that the ability to do one's best is limited not only by inner faculty, but also by circumstances—by what is called environment. And environment means the people by whom the individual is surrounded—their wills, their temperaments and dispositions, their conduct and the results of their conduct. The first environment of a child is its mother. Her disposition and conduct affects the infant at the beginning for good or ill. If she is loving and sunny, the best that is in the child is at once awakened and drawn forth; if she is selfish, gloomy, and indifferent, the powers dormant in the little one may be blighted at the outset. The same is true of the larger environment which includes father, brothers and sisters, friends, teachers and companions: just so far as the atmosphere they supply and the surroundings they make are favourable or unfavourable, so will the natural abilities of the child be unfolded or repressed. A child in a disorderly, disagreeable, and quarrelsome family, or a scholar in a disorderly class, has but little favourable opportunity for healthy development.

Hence we need to teach how truly we are members one of another; that the condition of those around us makes our condition in which we have to live and work; that the better disposition of one acts for good on others, and can change others for the better by persistent effort; that, while unfavourable surroundings do make healthy development difficult, no good effort to improve them can ever be in vain.

Consequently it is necessary in the home and at school, and everywhere, to urge the importance of right conduct. In that is expressed love to man and love to God. By that only can human nature and even God be justified and vindicated; in that only can there be real salvation from any danger; and by that alone can the kingdom of heaven be built up on earth.

And the importance of this needs to be emphasised by teaching right conduct as a duty we owe to everybody, as a responsibility for which each is to be held accountable. And it can be done by showing that we are all in each other's keeping, and that the welfare of all is affected for good or ill by everything we say or do.

The Teaching of Jesus.

The Fatherhood of God is, in the last resort, the sum and substance of the teaching of Jesus. If that be dimmed, obscured, or only half-heartedly accepted, then there can be no true following of Jesus in any other element. To say that God is too remote, or too vague, or too impersonal for the immediate and constant access and communion of man is to cut off Christianity at its source, to kill it at its root, to banish it from the soul. The Fatherhood was everything to Jesus. If it is not everything to us, we may be followers of this or that ecclesiastical school, but we are no followers of the first Prophet of the Christian faith.

To wake in men the vital consciousness of the presence of the Father, of his intimate converse with the seeking soul, of the strength, the joy, the inspiration for high and noble living that comes from the touch of the soul with God, that, and that alone, is to be a follower of Jesus and a prophet of his Gospel.

The religion of Jesus—the only religion which has the right to be called Christianity—is simply and solely the love of God as our Father and the human Brotherhood that springs therefrom. But it is a fair and gracious thing when out of that blooms forth a love of Jesus as the brother who has helped the world most of all towards that perfect spiritual faith.—R. A. Armstrong.

Jesus as the Christ.

Whether or not Jesus of Nazareth ever claimed the title of Messiah, it requires but a brief consideration of the Testaments to bring two facts to light: (1) that he certainly did not fulfil the Messianic expectations of his contemporaries suggested by the writings of the Prophets, and (2) that the disciples strove to prove that what were commonly regarded as Old Testament descriptions of the person who should hold this office, and other passages not so regarded by the Jews generally, were applicable to their Master.

The Jews anticipated that the Messiah would be a great national champion, a magnificent and all-conquering monarch of royal descent, raised up by God from among them; but if Jesus claimed to be the Christ, it has been lately suggested that he said in substance: I am your Messiah, not to drive the Romans from the land, but to drive out sin from your hearts; not to establish a political organisation, but to spread abroad a new spirit of life; not to subject your enemies, but to teach the forgiveness of enemies; not to enable you to rule, but to teach you to serve. I am the Messiah, but my mission is to show you by my own death how to save your life by losing it; I bring you a cross, not a sceptre; a yoke to bear, not a throne to occupy. I come to establish an eternal kingdom of love.

In this connection it is interesting to note that to be a Christ, or Messiah, or anointed of God, was not a privilege or a dignity accorded to Jesus of Nazareth exclusively. What says David of his predecessor on the throne, Saul? "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, the Lord's (Yahweh's) Messiah, to put forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the Messiah of Yahweh" (I. Sam. xxiv., 6). And again, when the young Amalekite confesses that, at Saul's request he stood upon and slew him, "How wast thou not afraid to put forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's Messiah?" (II. Sam. i., 14, 16), and condemns the young man to instant death because, he said, "Thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Messiah of Yahweh." And speaking of this same Saul, Samuel had before challenged the people to maintain any charge they had against him before Yahweh and before his Messiah—that is Saul. The same term is applied, and still more directly, in Isaiah to Cyrus, King of Persia, "Thus saith the Lord to his Messiah, Cyrus" (xlv., 1).

Our English version, indeed, in these cases has very properly used the word "Anointed," but, nevertheless, the word so rendered is "Messiah," and it is extremely important, if we wish to attain the truth, not to confound subsequent, derived, and developed meanings of words, with their original signification and the essential idea conveyed by them.

Nor can any one consider such an access of dignity and trust, in the case of Jesus, unseemly or unsuitable, for he surely, if any, was anointed of the Lord; he surely, if any, was anointed (commissioned) to preach glad tidings; he surely was anointed with the oil of God's gladness above his fellows, and was, par excellence, the Christ of God. Unitarians believe that in Jesus may be seen an incomparable pattern for the conduct of mankind, one who has manifested forth in a supreme degree many of the attributes of God, and also one who has inaugurated a new and ever-enlarging kingdom, in which love and not hate, right and not might, are the controlling spirits. Hence they have no hesitation in regarding him as the true Christ.

CENTONARIUS.

Jesus.

We conceive that Jesus of Nazareth lived and died, not to persuade the Father, not to appease the father, not to make a sanguinary purchase from the Father, but simply to "show us the Father"; to leave upon the human heart a new, deep, vivid impression of what God is in himself and of what he designs for his creature, man; to become, in short, the accepted interpreter of heaven and life. And this he achieved, in the only way of which we can conceive as practicable, by a new disclosure in his own person, of all that is holy and God-like in character."—J. Martineau.

To make some nook of creation a little fruitfuller, better, to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier, more blessed, less accursed! It is work for a God.—Carlyle.

Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good;
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.
—Tennyson.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.—Pope.

A Church Reminder.

December is the time when the revision of the Roll of Church Members has to take place. If there are any who have hitherto failed to fulfil the duties of membership during the year, the committee trust that they will remedy the omission at once, so that their names may be retained on the roll. They also give a hearty and sincere invitation to all those friends who have united with us in worship during the past year, but who have not joined with us in church membership. We ask for and require no pledges as to doctrinal belief; our church is broad enough to embrace all who are willing to unite for the "Worship of God, and the service of Man." The minimum subscription to qualify for membership is a sum which will bring it within the reach of all. The secretary or any member of the church committee will be glad to receive the names of those who are desirous of joining in church fellowship for the New Year.—(From a Church Calendar.)

Literature.

"Among the Dutchmen," by the Rev. Lucking Tavener; 1/-; A. H. Stockwell, 6 and 7, Creed Lane, Ludgate Hill, London, or from the Author, Ipswich.

A book of nine chapters describing Holland, some of the most famous Dutchmen, including Erasmus, William the Silent, Spinoza, Rubens, and Rembrandt, and the circumstances and influences which contributed to produce them. The pioneer work of Holland and the Dutch people in the development of civil and religious liberty in Europe, with special references to England, is brought out strongly in the early chapters; and the character sketches of the great Dutchmen, with the effect of environment upon them, are not only good biography, but include much that is best in the philosophy of life. There are discriminating studies of art and artists which to many readers would make a most helpful introduction to a knowledge of the Dutch school of painters as compared with those especially of Italy. In these pages Mr. Tavener has done some really good work.

"Paul," by the late Prof. Dr. W. Wrede, of Breslau, translated by Edward Lummis, M.A., with preface by J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., D.Litt., 2/- nett. "Jesus—Rabbi, Messiah, Martyr," by Herbert Rix, M.A., 1/- nett. Philip Green, 5, Essex Street, Strand, W.C.

Professor Wrede in this volume on "Paul" makes the great apostle not only the "second founder of Christianity," but the principal originator of orthodox Christian theology. With keen discrimination and profound insight does this writer sift from the material of the genuine epistles those doctrines specially originated by Paul, and he shows, too, how essentially different they are from the real teaching of Jesus. The conception of Christ in the Pauline letters is frankly denominated a "myth." "As a whole, Paul belongs absolutely to ecclesiastical orthodoxy"; but he "is in truth a figure grand enough to have a place in the world's history." "He preserved the new faith from pining away as a Jewish sect; he rescued it for history; but he did this by transforming its character." Concerning Paul the Man, his work, and his theology, this informing treatise will be of great service to any who are seeking to know the real nature of the great apostle's mission and of his share in the ecclesiastical and theological origins of the Christian Church. Mr. Lummis has most creditably rendered the work into very readable English; and the preface by Dr. Estlin Carpenter commends the book worthily. In that preface we are told that what is essential for the understanding of Paul and of his ideas is that "the interpreter should come to his words through the modes of thought and feeling belonging to Paul's own time, rather than through the fabrics of doctrine which theologians of a later day have reared upon them." "Such a guide is to be found in the late Prof. Wrede," and in the sketch which these pages contain "he has condensed the results of laborious years."

Mr. Rix's "Rabbi, Messiah, Martyr," is a modern picture of the story of Jesus, in three chapters headed respectively (1) The Carpenter becomes a Rabbi, (2) The Rabbi becomes a Messiah, (3) The Messiah becomes a Martyr. It is a concise account, "freed from the dust and distortions of tradition." Mr. Rix takes the position that Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah. Though this is a matter of opinion amongst critics and scholars, Mr. Rix has expressed his view of it in such a reasonable manner that in his sense it becomes less difficult of acceptance to those still in doubt. As a summary of the most clearly ascertained facts of the life of Jesus, shorn of myth and legend, this little book will undoubtedly supply a want felt by many who are seeking for such an account in a brief and handy form.

"The Early Church: Its Orders and Institutions," by A. Hermann Thomas, M.A., 2/6 nett; "The Practical Teaching of Jesus of Nazareth," compiled by Arthur W. Fox, M.A., 1/6 nett.—Sunday School Association, Essex Hall, London.

Mr. Thomas's "Early Church," in its 270 pages, covers much ground, and deals with a considerable number of subjects and details concerning the development and consolidation of ecclesiastical institutions in the first ages of Christendom. The work is really a sequel to a previous volume by the Rev. W. E. Addis, M.A., entitled "Christianity and the Roman Empire," published in 1893. As Professor J. E. Carpenter states in the prefatory note, the object of the book is "to sketch the process by which the Christian Church gradually acquired a particular kind of government, and embodied its faith and hope in special rites, which ultimately secured its predominance over all rivals." The variety of subjects explained, the many references and quotations from sources of information, indicate considerable painstaking research, and make this a very helpful and valuable manual for the student of Church history, and especially for ministers and teachers. Information is here brought together which can otherwise be found only by consulting many larger and less accessible works, and Mr. Thomas has certainly presented it in a manner and form equally creditable to himself and commendable to the minds of his readers.

Mr. Fox on "The Practical Teaching" of Jesus gives us 34 admirable lessons compiled from the Gospel according to Matthew. These lessons—or the substance of them—were given to a Bible Class in connection with a Sunday School Union, attended by representatives of six different Nonconformist denominations, including Unitarians. In each case the lesson consists of part of a chapter from Matthew's Gospel, followed by (1) notes of explanation, (2) Illustrations, (3) Additional Illustrations" to be looked up by the teacher" from books the titles of which are given, with chapters and sections stated. In justice to Mr. Fox it should be

said that the lesson explanations are plain and good, and that the illustrating anecdotes and incidents are most suitable and apt to the purpose. It is a fortunate thing that these lessons are here placed at the disposal of teachers generally, for it is certain that they will assist many of them to do more effective work for the lasting benefit of their pupils. It is safe to anticipate a good demand for such a book as this.

The British and Foreign Unitarian Association (Essex Hall, London) has issued a useful tract on "The Virgin Birth," by Charles Travers (1d.), which critically examines the theory and accounts of the supposed Virgin Birth of Jesus, and shows its unreasonableness and impossibility. It is very suitable to put into the hands of orthodox inquirers, and will help to unravel an awkward problem for those who are yet perplexed upon this question.

The latest issue from the Mill Hill pulpit (Leeds) is the sermon preached by Dr. Robert Collyer, of New York, at Mill Hill Chapel on Sept. 15th, entitled "Looking towards Sunset" (1d.—Goodall and Suddick, Leeds; or Mr. Chas. Stainer, 12, Hessle Place, Hyde Park, Leeds); and it is a characteristic utterance of this veteran preacher on growing old, on the love of life, and on the necessity of personal life beyond this of earth. If this sermon, with its genial outlook, could be spread broadcast, it would bring joy to many hearts and comfort to others who are whelmed in doubt.

"The Gospel of the Holy Man Jesus" (1d.), by Rev. S. Burrows, Hastings, a reply to the Rev. J. Matthewman's "Criticism of Unitarianism," is an excellent defence on the particular points attacked by the Wesleyan critic.

The National Conference.

The Rev. Joseph Wood, as President of the National Conference of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, has been doing a good work in his visitation of our churches in South Wales, in East Cheshire, and in the London district recently. He has preached some fine and uplifting sermons in the pulpits, and he has held conferences with the congregations and with District Associations. His sermons have been thoroughly good Unitarian doctrine, and his plea at the conferences, that our churches shall come into closer association with each other for mutual help and collective work, is admirable and worthy of the most earnest support. Our churches need to combine more, to act more together as one body so as to be a greater force in both local and national life. Isolation and standing apart from each other is a weakness; union is strength. By all means, then—more union.

Mr. Wood did well to explain that there is no antagonism on the part of the National Conference towards the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Of course there is not, and there never was. It would destroy the Conference if it ever attempted such a thing. Such antagonism as did and does exist was, and is, on the part of the prominent individuals who have used their influence with the Conference in that direction. But it is to be hoped that they have recognised the folly of such a course. To de-Unitarianise the Conference would simply kill it; to make it more strongly and more openly Unitarian would give it greater power. It would then stand for something definite enough for the world and our own churches to understand.

Mr. Wood was scarcely correct in his painstaking distinction between the Conference and the B. and F.U.A., when he said that the former represents the churches, while the latter represents only individuals. The B. and F.U.A. represents more than individuals—it also represents churches. The District Associations of churches subscribe annually to the funds of the Association, and elect delegates to represent such Associations of churches in the management of the B. and F.U.A. The churches, too, are represented in the B. and F.U.A. financially by their annual collections for its funds; and if the principle of taxation on churches, even on the voluntary principle, in strict justice involves church representation, the B. and F.U.A. is potentially and will inevitably become directly representative of the churches.

The B. and F.U.A., to be logical, should complete its organisation of church representation, allowing each church contributing to its funds to vote by delegate in its management. It is imperative that the B. and F.U.A. should become more representative, and not less. And if the Triennial Conference becomes really the national organisation of our churches, the B. and F.U.A. must be its ally—the two should in some way be federated together for work, each controlling its own business.

Whether thy work be fine or coarse, planting corn or writing epics, so only it be honest work done to thine own approbation, it shall earn a reward to the senses as well as to the thought; no matter how often defeated you are born to victory. The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.—Emerson.

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts.
—Longfellow.

Within the last half year ending in October the British and Foreign Unitarian Association made grants of 55,000 Unitarian tracts for distribution, 40,000 of which were used in four vans; 2,000 Unitarian books have been presented to public libraries, ministers, and lay preachers; and as many as 73 "orthodox" ministers have applied for a grant of Unitarian books—on their own initiative.

The Scotch Van Mission held 90 meetings, with attendances which averaged 358, while at Renfrew about 2,000 people were present.

Postal Mission Work.

By MISS FLORENCE HILL,
Hon. Sec. Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers 'Union.

Those who read the Rev. R. Newell's interesting account of the Suffolk Village Mission, in the September number of "Unity," will be pleased to hear that the new club-room so eagerly desired by the young men at Bedfield and the surrounding villages has been most satisfactorily completed, and was formally opened by Miss Tagart, president of the Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers' Union, on Oct. 21st, on the occasion of the anniversary meetings of the Bedfield and Framlingham Unitarian Chapels. It is a light, bright room, with three large windows looking on to the little garden; and there is also a stove and apparatus for tea and coffee, so that the men will be able to get refreshments on the premises without drifting into the public-house. Books, illustrated papers, and games are provided, and Mr. Newell has arranged an excellent programme of lantern lectures and other entertainments, as well as some more serious meetings to explain the new Allotment Act: a matter of supreme importance to the agricultural labourers, and one which needs elucidation. At the meeting Miss Tagart expressed her pleasure at the generous response from friends of the Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers' Union to the appeal to contribute to the building fund, which enabled her to open the room free of debt. All present expressed their satisfaction, and highly approved of the way in which Mr. Curtis, the local builder, had carried out the work. We were glad to hear that two village rooms had been opened in other parts of Suffolk. Surely no better Unitarian or temperance work could be done than thus giving the country-folk access to such meeting-places, which exert uplifting influences, free from petty tyranny or patronage which squire, parson, and despotic farmer are apt to exercise.

How much also are our Norwich friends to be congratulated on the splendid Martineau Memorial just completed! It is very striking how the devout and saintly nature of Dr. Martineau seems to make itself felt in every line he writes. We Postal Mission workers are constantly having proofs of this, and his writings are nearly always singled out for special notice by our correspondents. A few letters lie open before me, from which I quote:

> "I express sincere thanks for your kindness in lending Dr. Martineau's 'Seat of Authority in Religion."
>
> "I have received profit beyond what any words can explain. I am in love with Dr. Martineau, what with reading that book and his 'Life.' I have often of late stood awed in reverence at so great, majestic, and pure a personality. I shall not rest till I possess a copy of the 'Seat of Authority.' It would take me years to master it, and it would immensely deepen and strengthen my religious life to saturate my soul with its truths."

Another writer says:

> "I should like to thank you and your Society for giving me the opportunity of reading Martineau's Life. My admiration for Dr. Martineau has been increased a hundredfold. His marvellous power of language, and depth yet clearness of thought, have especially struck me. His views regarding the person of Christ as revealer of God, and his definitions of Inspiration and Incarnation attract me greatly, and help immensely towards grasping the significance of truths hitherto distorted and obscured by orthodox phraseology."

Yet another says:

> "It was with feelings of sadness and regret that I closed the biography of Dr. Martineau: of sadness to think that saintly scholar and teacher is with us no more, and regret that it was never my good fortune to sit at his feet; for I am sure he would have sympathised with my hunger and thirst for knowledge, truth, holiness. Dr. Martineau was truly a loveable character, possessing in a large measure those Christian graces (meekness, gentleness, kindness, humility, self-sacrificing activity) that constitute true nobility of character; these, combined with his natural abilities and great learning, made him indeed a great man."

Such letters as these are often received by the Postal Mission Secretaries, who rejoice to see how the living word and saintly influence survive the outer form. How true, indeed, it is that these saintly ones who have entered into the higher life, though they rest from their labours, yet "their works do follow them."

Notes and News.

It is considered that "Unity," the original name, should be permanent—and henceforth that will be so.

This issue completes Vol. IV. Several readers wish to have the 1907 copies bound up with an index; but so far this annual binding, and publishing of an index, is a serious loss to the Editor, because the volumes are left on his hands. Unless 100 copies are spoken for, the cost is not defrayed. Could not 20 churches guarantee to dispose of four copies each? Four copies, 4/- post free; one copy 1/3 by post. Please send in orders at once, so that the Editor will know what to do.

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The note in last issue relating to Dr. Geo. Dawes Hicks has met with more commendation than was expected. Correspondence has been received expressing disapproval of Dr. Hicks' attitude. And the Rev. H. Rawlings, M.A., in public meeting, has contradicted Dr. Hicks and vindicated the Van Mission propaganda. If Dr. Hicks professes to be a Unitarian, and accepts engagements to conduct Unitarian services from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association—at Cambridge, for example—how can he consistently object to Unitarian propaganda? As a resident in Cambridge he is either in sympathy

with the spread of Unitarianism in that city or he is not. If not—how can he consistently be a Unitarian preacher there? Dr. Hicks knows well himself where he is, in relation to Unitarianism, but it is just as well that Unitarians should know it, too.

The new Unitarian movement at Ilford is prospering so much that ground has now been secured for the erection of a church building.

It is pleasing to note that special meetings have been held by several churches to welcome back their ministers from America.

So keenly interested have American Unitarians become in the working of our Van Mission, in consequence of the addresses they have heard from the lips of the Rev. T. P. Spedding, that it is definitely decided that there will be an American Van Mission next year. Let Dr. Hicks take note.

The Borough Council of Heywood has re-elected its Unitarian Mayor, Mr. David Healey, to serve a second year, and there are Unitarian Mayors at Croydon, Glossop, Ashton, and other places.

The Rev. F. K. Freeston is delivering in London a course of lectures on "The Development of Unitarian Thought from the Reformation to the Present Time."

The new Unitarian cause at Ansdell is progressing most encouragingly, with large congregations.

There is to be a Unitarian Van Mission in Wales next season.

What can the Committee of our National Conference really be about in sending a resolution to Boston, U.S.A., in which it is stated that the Conference "has no declaration of belief," and "rejoices in its freedom from such fetters"? Can such a resolution truly represent our churches? Have we not a common Faith, and ought it to be implied that inability to say what it is is matter for rejoicing? And is it true that such a statement, if made, could possibly be a fetter to Unitarians?

The Rev. J. Page Hopps has been preaching and lecturing to very satisfactory audiences on a tour of visitation amongst the churches of North Lancashire and Westmoreland, under the auspices of the British and Foreign Unitarian—and the local district—Associations.

There are scarcely any Unitarian churches in North Wales, and there are signs that this lack will be remedied.

It is announced that there is to be a fund to enable Unitarian ministers in England to occasionally exchange pulpits with American ministers.

The 278th anniversary of the First Unitarian Church of Salem, Mass., U.S.A., has just been celebrated (Oct. 14th). The first Unitarian Church in England dates from 1650, but the first in America, it is stated, dates from 1606, but does not this need some qualification?

Immense crowds are attending the popular Sunday evening services at the Euston Theatre, London, conducted by the Rev. John Page Hopps.

Gerald Massey, one of the poets of Universalism, has passed away. He wrote: "I think that heaven will not be shut for evermore, without a knocker left upon the door."

The Council of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association considers that "it is highly desirable to continue calling the attention of congregations to the risk incurred in inviting unknown men to occupy pulpits."

The Rev. Wm. James, B.A., J.P., of Llandyssul, South Wales, the foremost leader of Welsh Unitarianism, has passed away at the age of 59 years.

Sir Oliver Lodge dismissed the notion of a bodily resurrection as "a pagan superstition," when lecturing amongst the Congregationalists at Memorial Hall, London, Tuesday, Oct. 29th.

The Rev. Dr. Workman has been compelled to resign his position at the Montreal Wesleyan College, on the charge of Unitarianism.

Mr. Wm. Wallace Bruce, L.C.C., of our Essex Church, Kensington, London, died on Sunday, Oct. 20th, in his 62nd year; and on the same day the Rev. W. W. Robinson, of Gainsborough, aged 74, till then the oldest surviving alumnus of the Unitarian Home Missionary College.

The 1907 Van Mission held 423 meetings, as against 139 in 1906, with 290 average attendance, as against 176, and a gross total attendance of 122,703, as compared with 24,516, the highest single attendance 2,000, against 1,200.

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